86

A WORD OF ADVICE TO Saints and Sinners.

THE EIGHTH EDITION.

LONDON: Printed by R. HAWES,
And sold at the FOUNDRY, in Moorfields, and at the Rev. Mr. WESLEY's Preaching-Houses in Town and Country. 1777.

A WORD of ADVICE, &c.

1. A Word of Advice to my own heart and thine. Thou partakeſt of the ordinances of God. Thou doſt well. But if thou haſt not the blood of Chriſt at the root of all, they will prove but painted pageantry to go to hell in.

Try every day, on what bottom thy hope of glory is built, and whether it was laid by the hand of Chriſt. If not, it will never be able to endure the ſtorm that muſt come againſt it. Satan will throw it all down, and great will be the fall thereof.

Glorious profeſſor! Thou ſhalt be winnowed; every vein of thy profeſſion will be tryed to the purpoſe: 'tis terrible to have it all come tumbling down, and to find nothing to bottom upon.

Soaring profeſſor! See to thy waxen wings betimes; they will melt with the heat of tempations. What a miſery is it, to trade much, and break at length; and to have no ſtock, no foundation laid for eternity!

Gifted profeſſor! Look there be not a worm at the root, that will ſpoil all thy fine gourd, and make it die about thee, in a day of ſcorching: look over thy ſoul daily, and aſk, Where is the blood of Chriſt to be ſeen upon it? Many eminent profeſſors have come at length to cry out, *undone, undone to all eternity!*

2. Conſider the greateſt ſins may be hid under the greateſt duties. See the wound, that ſin hath made in thy ſoul, be perfectly cured by the *blood of Chriſt*; not ſkinned over with duties, humblings, enlargements. Apply what thou wilt beſides the *blood of Chriſt*, it will poiſon the ſore. Thou wilt find that ſin was never mortified truly; nothing can kill it but the beholding *Chriſt's righteouſneſs*.

Nature can afford no balſam fit for the cure of a ſoul. Healing from *duty*, and not from Chriſt, is the moſt deſperate diſeaſe. Poor, ragged nature, with all it's higheſt improvements, can never ſpin a garment fine enough to cover the ſoul's nakedneſs. Nothing is fit for that uſe, but *Chriſt's perfect righteouſneſs*.

Whatſoever is of nature's putting on, Satan will come and plunder it, and leave the ſoul naked and open

to

to the wrath of God. All that nature can do will never make up the leaſt dram of grace that can mortify ſin, or look Chriſt in the face one day.

3. Thou goeſt on hearing, praying, and receiving, yet miſerable mayſt thou be. Look about thee; didſt thou ever ſee Chriſt to this day in diſtinction from all other excellencies and righteouſneſs in the world, and all them falling before the majeſty of his love and grace?

If thou haſt ſeen Chriſt truly, thou haſt ſeen pure grace, pure righteouſneſs, far exceeding all ſin and miſery. If thou haſt ſeen Chriſt, thou wouldſt not do a duty without him for ten thouſand worlds. If ever thou ſaw Chriſt, thou ſaweſt him a *rock*, higher than Satan or ſin; and this *rock* doth follow thee, and there will be a continual dropping of honey and grace out of it to ſatisfy thee. Examine, if ever thou haſt beheld Chriſt as *the only begotten of the Father*, full of grace and truth. Be *ſure* thou art come to Chriſt, that thou ſtandeſt upon *the rock of ages*, haſt anſwered to his call to *thy* ſoul, haſt cloſed with him for juſtification.

4. Men *talk* bravely of believing; but few *know* it. Chriſt is the myſtery of the ſcripture. Grace the myſtery of Chriſt. Believing is the moſt wonderful thing in the world. Put any thing of thine own to it, and thou ſpoileſt it; Chriſt will not ſo much as look at it for believing. When thou comeſt to Chriſt, thou muſt leave behind thee thy *own* righteouſneſs, and bring nothing but thy *ſin*, (Oh that is hard!) leave behind all thy holineſs, and bring nothing but thy *wants* and *miſeries*, elſe Chriſt is not fit for thee, nor thou for Chriſt. Chriſt will be a pure redeemer, and thou muſt be an *undone* ſinner, or Chriſt and thou will never agree. It is the hardeſt thing in the world to take Chriſt *alone* for righteouſneſs: that's to acknowledge him Chriſt. Join any thing to him of *thy own*, and thou *un-Chriſts* him.

Whatever comes in when thou goeſt to God for acceptance, (beſides Chriſt) call it *Anti-Chriſt*; bid it be gone; make only Chriſt's righteouſneſs triumphant; all beſides that is *Babylon*, which muſt fall if Chriſt ſtand; and thou ſhalt rejoice in the day of the fall thereof. Chriſt *alone* did tread the wine-preſs, and there

was none with him. If thou join any thing to Chriſt, Chriſt will trample upon it in fury and anger, and ſtain his raiment with the blood thereof. Thou thinkeſt it eaſy to *believe:* was ever thy faith tried with a thorough ſight of ſin? Was it ever put to grapple with Satan, and the wrath of God lying upon the conſcience? When thou waſt in the mouth of hell, then did God ſhew thee Chriſt a ranſom? If then thou couldſt ſay, *Oh I ſee grace enough in Chriſt!* thou mayſt ſay that which is the biggeſt word in the world, *Thou believeſt*; but untried faith is uncertain faith.

5. To believing, there muſt go a clear conviction of ſin, and the merits of the *blood of Chriſt*, and of Chriſt's willingneſs to ſave upon this conſideration merely, *That thou art a ſinner:* things all harder than to make a world. All the power in nature cannot get up ſo high, in a ſtorm of ſin and guilt, as really to believe there is any willingneſs in Chriſt to ſave. When Satan chargeth ſin upon the conſcience, then to charge it upon *Chriſt*, that is goſpel-like. That is to make him Chriſt, he ſerves for that uſe. To accept his *blood alone* for ſalvation, that is the ſum of the goſpel. When the ſoul in all duties and diſtreſſes, can ſay, nothing but Chriſt for juſtification, ſanctification, redemption; not humblings, not duties, not graces, that ſoul hath got above the reach of the billows.

All Satan's advantages are laid in *ſelf-righteouſneſs*; God purſueth this by ſetting Satan upon thee; this muſt be torn from thee; this alone hinders Chriſt from coming in; and till Chriſt come in, guilt will not go out; and where guilt is, there is hardneſs of heart.

6. When guilt is raiſed up, take heed of getting it allayed any way, but by Chriſt's *blood*. Make Chriſt thy peace, not thy duties, thy tears; Chriſt thy righteouſneſs, not thy graces. Look at Chriſt, and do as much as thou wilt. Stand with all thy weight upon Chriſt's righteouſneſs; take heed of having one foot on thy *own* righteouſneſs, another on Chriſt's. Till Chriſt come and ſit on high upon a throne of grace, there is nothing but guilt and terror, the ſoul hanging between hope and fear, which is an un-goſpel ſtate.

He

He that fears to see the utmost hell of his own heart, suspects the merit of Christ. Be thou ever such a sinner, try Jesus Christ, *the righteous*. In all doubtings, fears, storms of conscience, look at Christ continually. Do not argue with Satan; (he deserves no better) bid him go to Christ, and he will answer him; it is his office to be our advocate, his office to answer justice; and he is sworn to that office. Put Christ upon it. If thou wilt do any thing thyself, as to satisfaction for sin, thou renouncest Christ, the righteous.

7. Satan may alledge scripture, but he cannot answer scripture. It is Christ's word of mighty authority: Christ foiled Satan with it. In all the scripture, there is not an ill word against a *poor* sinner, stript of his *own* righteousness. Nay, it plainly points out this man for the grace of the gospel, and none else. Believe but Christ's willingness, and that will make *thee* willing. If thou find, thou can't not believe; remember, it is Christ's work to make thee believe. Put him upon it. He works to will and to do. Mourn for thy unbelief, which is setting up guilt above Christ; an undervaluing the merits of Christ, accounting his *blood* an unholy, a common, and unsatisfying thing.

Thou complainest much of thyself. Doth thy sin make thee look more at Christ; less at thyself? That is right; else complaining is but hypocrisy. To be looking at duties and graces, when thou should'st be looking at Christ, that is pitiful: looking at them will but make thee proud; looking at Christ will make thee humble. In all thy temptations, be not discouraged. Those surges may be (not to break thee, but) to heave thee off thyself, on the rock, Christ.

Thou mayest be brought low, even to the brink of hell, ready to tumble in; thou canst not be brought lower than the belly of hell; yet there thou mayst look towards the holy temple. Into the *old* temple none might enter, but purified ones, and with an offering too. But now Christ is our temple, to whom none must come, but *sinners*, and that without any offering, but his *own blood* once offered.

8. Thou thinkest, Oh, what a monument of grace should I be! There are many thousands as rich monu-

ments as thou. The greateſt ſinner did never paſs the grace of Chriſt. When the clouds are blackeſt, then look towards Chriſt, the ſtanding pillar of the Father's love. His blood ſpeaks reconciliation, redemption, liberty, nighneſs to God. Not a drop of his blood ſhall be loſt. Stand and hearken what God will ſay; for he will ſpeak peace to his people, that they return no more to folly. He ſpeaks grace, mercy, and peace. That is the language of the Father, and of Chriſt. Wait for Chriſt's appearing, as the morning ſtar. He ſhall come as certain as the morning, as refreſhing as the rain.

The ſun may as well be hindered from riſing, as Chriſt, the ſun of righteouſneſs. Look not a moment off Chriſt. Look not upon ſin, but look upon Chriſt alſo. In every duty look at Chriſt; before duty, to pardon; in duty, to aſſiſt; after duty, to accept. Without this, it is but carnal, careleſs duty. Let ſin break thy heart, but not thy hope in the goſpel.

9. If thou haſt looked at works, duties, qualifications, more than at the merits of Chriſt, it will coſt thee dear. No wonder thou goeſt complaining: graces may be evidences, but the merits of Chriſt muſt be the foundation of thy hope.

When we come to God, we muſt bring nothing but Chriſt with us. Any ingredients of our own will poiſon faith. He that builds upon duties or graces, knows not the merits of Chriſt. This makes believing ſo hard, ſo far above nature: if thou believeſt, thou muſt every day renounce thy obedience, thy ſanctification, thy duties, thy graces, and nothing but Chriſt muſt be held up. Thou muſt take all out of God's hand. Chriſt is the gift of God: faith is the gift of God: pardon a free gift. Ah, how nature ſtorms, frets, rageth at this, that all is of *gifts*, and it can purchaſe nothing with tears and duties; that all it's workings are excluded, and of no value in heaven!

Conſider, didſt thou ever yet ſee the merits of Chriſt, and the infinite ſatisfaction made by his death? Didſt thou ſee this, when the burden of ſin and the wrath of God lay heavy on thy conſcience? That is grace. The greatneſs of Chriſt's merit is not known, but to a poor ſoul

ſoul at the greateſt loſs. Slight convictions will have but ſlight prizings of Chriſt's blood and merits.

10. *Deſpairing ſinner!* Thou lookeſt on thy right hand and on thy left, ſaying, *Who will ſhew us any good?* Look at Chriſt and be ſaved, all ye ends of the earth. There is none elſe. He is a ſaviour, and there is none beſides him. Look any where elſe, and thou art undone. God will look at nothing but Chriſt, and *thou* muſt look at nothing elſe. Chriſt is lifted up on high, (as the brazen ſerpent in the wilderneſs) that ſinners at the ends of the earth, at the greateſt diſtance may ſee him. The leaſt ſight of him will be ſaving, the leaſt touch healing to thee; and God intends thou ſhouldſt look on him, for he hath ſet him on a high throne of glory, in the open view of all poor ſinners. Thou haſt infinite reaſon to look on him. For he will bear thy burdens; he will forgive, not only till ſeven times, but ſeventy times ſeven. It put the faith of the apoſtle to it to believe this, Luke xvii. 4, 5. becauſe *we* are hard to forgive, we think Chriſt is hard.

11. Hear what he ſaid, I have found a ranſom. In him I am well pleaſed. God will have nothing elſe; nothing elſe will do thee good, or ſatisfy conſcience, but Chriſt, who ſatisfied the Father. God doth all upon the account of Chriſt. Thy deſerts are hell, wrath, rejection. Chriſt's deſerts are life and pardon. He will not only *ſhew* thee the one, but he will give thee the other. It's Chriſt's own glory and happineſs to pardon. Conſider, while Chriſt was upon earth, he was more among publicans and ſinners, than among *ſcribes* and *phariſees:* and he hath the ſame love now in heaven; he is God and changeth not. He went through all temptations, ſorrows, deſertions; and hath drank the bitterеſt of the cup, and left thee the ſweet; the condemnation is out; Chriſt drank up all the Father's wrath at one draught; and nothing but ſalvation is left for thee. Thou ſayſt thou canſt not believe, thou canſt not repent. Fitter for Chriſt, if thou haſt nothing but ſin and miſery. Go to Chriſt with all thy impenitency and unbelief, to get faith and repentance; that is glorious. Tell Chriſt, *Lord, I have brought no righteouſneſs, no*

grace

grace to be juſtified by; I am come for thine, and muſt have it. We would be bringing to Chriſt, and that muſt not be; not a penny of nature's higheſt improvements will paſs in heaven.

12. To ſay in compliment, *I am a ſinner*, is eaſy; but to pray with the publican indeed, *Lord, be merciful to me a ſinner*, is the hardeſt prayer in the world. It is eaſy to ſay, *I believe in Chriſt*; but not to ſee him full of grace and truth, *of whoſe fullneſs thou mayſt receive grace for grace.* It is eaſy to profeſs Chriſt with the mouth; but to confeſs him with the heart, that's above fleſh and blood. Many call Chriſt, *Saviour*; few know him ſo. To ſee grace and ſalvation in Chriſt is the greateſt ſight in the world; none can do that, but at the ſame time they ſhall ſee, that glory and ſalvation are theirs. I may be aſhamed to think, that to this day I have known ſo little of the blood of Chriſt, which is the main thing of the goſpel. A chriſtleſs, formal profeſſion is the blackeſt ſight next to hell. Thou mayſt have many good things, and yet one thing may be wanting, that may make thee go away ſorrowful from Chriſt. Thou haſt never ſold all thou haſt, never parted with *all* thine own righteouſneſs. Thou mayſt be high in duty, and yet a perfect adverſary to Chriſt. In every prayer, in every ordinance, labour after ſanctification to thy utmoſt; but make not a Chriſt of it to ſave thee; if ſo, it muſt come down one way or other. Chriſt's infinite ſatisfaction, not thy ſatisfaction, muſt be juſtification before God. When the Lord ſhall appear terrible out of his holy place, fire ſhall conſume that as hay and ſtubble. This will be found religion, only to bottom all upon the everlaſting mountains of God's love and grace in Chriſt, to live continually in the ſight of Chriſt's infinite merits (they are ſanctifying, without them the heart is carnal) and in thoſe ſights to ſee the full vileneſs of ſin, and to ſee all pardoned; in thoſe ſights to pray and hear, ſeeing all thy weak performances accepted continually, to trample upon all thy own righteouſneſs, and be found continually in the righteouſneſs of Chriſt only. Without the blood of Chriſt on the conſcience, all is dead ſervice.

13. Search

13. Search the ſcriptures daily, as mines of gold wherein the heart of Chriſt is laid. Watch againſt conſtitutional ſins; ſee them in their vileneſs, and they ſhall never break out into act. Keep always an humble, empty, broken frame of heart, ſenſible of any ſpiritual miſcarriage, obſervant of all inward workings, fit for the higheſt communications. Keep not guilt in the conſcience, but apply the blood of Chriſt immediately. God chargeth ſin and guilt upon thee, to make thee look to Chriſt, the brazen ſerpent.

Judge not Chriſt's love by providence, but by promiſes. Bleſs God for any way, whereby he keeps the ſoul awakened, and looking after Chriſt: better ſickneſs and temptations, than ſecurity and ſlightneſs.

A ſlighty ſpirit will turn a prophane ſpirit, and will *ſin* and *pray* too. Slightneſs is the bane of profeſſion. If it be not rooted out of the heart, by conſtant and ſerious dealings with, and beholdings of Chriſt in duties, it will grow more ſtrong, and more deadly, by being under church-ordinances. Be ſerious and exact in duty, having the weight of it upon thy heart; but be as much afraid of grounding thy comfort on duties, as on ſins. Comfort from any hand, but Chriſt, is deadly. Be much in prayer, or you will never keep up much communion with God. As you are in cloſet prayer, ſo you will be in all other ordinances.

14. Be true to truth, but not turbulent and ſcornful; reſtore ſuch as are fallen, with all the bowels of Chriſt. Set the broken, disjointed bones, with the grace of the goſpel! Deſpiſe not the weak; thou mayſt come to wiſh to be in the condition of the meaneſt of them. Be faithful to others' infirmities, but ſenſible of thine own. Viſit ſick beds, and deſerted ſouls much; they are excellent ſcholars in experience.

Abide in your calling. Be dutiful to all relations, as to the Lord. Be content with little of the world; little will ſerve. Think every little much, becauſe unworthy of the leaſt. Think every one better than thyſelf; loathing thyſelf as one fit to be trampled on by all ſaints. See the vanity of the world, and love nothing but Chriſt. Mourn to ſee ſo little of Chriſt in the world.

To

To a ſecure ſoul, Chriſt is but a fable, the ſcripture but a ſtory. Mourn to think how many are under church order, that are not under grace. Prepare for the croſs; welcome it; bear it triumphantly like Chriſt's croſs, whether ſcoffs, mockings, contempt, impriſonments.—But ſee it be Chriſt's croſs, not thine own.

15. Sin will hinder from glory in the croſs of Chriſt. And omitting little things againſt light may breed hell in the conſcience, as well as committing the greateſt ſins. If thou haſt been taken out of the belly of hell into Chriſt's boſom, and made to ſit among princes in the houſhold of God; Oh, how ſhouldſt thou live as a pattern of mercy! Redeemed, reſtored ſoul, what infinite ſums doſt thou owe Chriſt! With what zeal ſhouldſt thou walk, and do every duty! Sabbaths! what praiſing days ſhould they be to thee! Church fellowſhip! what a heaven, a being with Chriſt, and angels, and ſaints! What a drowning of the ſoul in eternal love, as a burial with Chriſt, dying to all things beſides him! Every time thou thinkeſt of Chriſt, be aſtoniſhed; and when thou ſeeſt ſin, look at Chriſt's grace, that did pardon it; and when thou art proud, look at Chriſt's grace, that ſhall ſtrike thee down in the duſt.

Remember Chriſt's time of love. When thou waſt naked, then he choſe thee. Canſt thou ever have a proud thought? Remember whoſe arms ſupported thee from ſinking, and delivered thee from the loweſt hell; and ſhout in the ears of angels and men, and for ever ſing praiſe, praiſe! grace, grace! Daily repent and pray; and walk in the ſight of grace, as one that hath the anointings of grace upon thee. Remember thy ſins, Chriſt's pardonings; thy deſerts, Chriſt's merits; thy weakneſs, Chriſt's ſtrength; thy pride, Chriſt's humility; thy guilts, Chriſt's new application of his blood; thy wants, Chriſt's fulneſs; thy temptations, Chriſt's tenderneſs; thy vileneſs, Chriſt's righteouſneſs.

16. Trifle not with ordinances. Be much in meditation and prayer. Wait diligently upon all opportunities of hearing. We have need of doctrine, reproof, exhortation, conſolation, as the tender herb and the graſs hath of the rain, the dew, the ſmall rain, and

and ſhowers. Do all thou doeſt as unto Chriſt, as immediately dealing with Chriſt Jeſus, as if he were looking on thee, and thou on him, and fetch all thy ſtrength from him.

Obſerve what holy motions you find in your ſouls to duties; prize the leaſt good thought thou haſt of Chriſt. The leaſt good word thou ſpeakeſt of him from the heart, is rich mercy: O bleſs God for it! Obſerve, if every day you have the day-ſpring from on high, with his morning dews of mourning for ſin, conſtantly viſiting thee. Have you the bright morning ſtar, with freſh influences of grace and peace conſtantly ariſing, and Chriſt ſweetly greeting the ſoul in all duties? What duties make not more ſpiritual, will make more carnal; what doth not quicken and humble, will deaden and harden.

17. *Judas* had a ſop: but *John* leaned on Chriſt's boſom; that is the poſture, in which we ſhould pray, and hear, and perform all duties. Nothing but lying in that boſom will diſſolve all hardneſs of heart, and make thee to mourn kindly for ſin. That will humble indeed, and make the ſoul cordial to Chriſt, and ſin vile to the ſoul. Never think thou art as thou ſhouldſt be, until thou come to this, always to ſee and feel thyſelf lying in the boſom of Chriſt, who is in the boſom of his Father. Come and move the Father for a ſight of Chriſt, and you ſhall be ſure to ſpeed; you can come with no requeſt that pleaſeth him better: he gave him out of his own boſom for that very end, to be held up before the eyes of all ſinners, as the everlaſting monument of his father's love.

Looking at the natural ſun weakeneth the eye. The more you look at Chriſt, the ſun of righteouſneſs, the ſtronger and clearer will the eye of faith be. Look but at Chriſt, and you will love him, and live on him. Think on him continually; keep the eye conſtantly upon Chriſt's blood, or every blaſt of temptation will ſhake you. If you will ſee ſin's ſinfulneſs, to loath it and mourn, do not ſtand looking on ſin only, but look upon Chriſt as ſuffering and ſatisfying. If you would ſee your grace, your ſanctification, do not ſtand gazing upon

upon them, but look at Chriſt's righteouſneſs firſt; look at your grace in the ſecond place.

18. Have nothing to do with thy graces and ſanctification, 'till thou haſt ſeen Chriſt firſt. He that looks upon Chriſt thro' his graces, is like one that ſees the ſun in water, which wavereth and moveth as the water doth. Look upon Chriſt as ſhining in the firmament of the father's love, and you will ſee him in his own glory. Pride and unbelief will put you upon ſeeing ſomewhat in yourſelf firſt; but faith will have to do with none but Chriſt, who muſt ſwallow up thy ſanctification as well as thy ſin. He that ſets up his ſanctification to look at firſt, he ſets up the greateſt idol, which will ſtrengthen his doubts and fears. Do but look off Chriſt, and preſently (like *Peter*) you ſink in doubts.

If you would pray and cannot, and ſo are diſcouraged, ſee Chriſt praying for you: if you are troubled, ſee Chriſt your peace, leaving you peace, when he went up into heaven, again and again, charging you not to be troubled, ſo as to obſtruct your comfort or your believing. He is now upon the throne, having ſpoiled, upon his croſs, all whatſoever can hurt or annoy thee: he hath borne all thy ſins, ſorrows, troubles, temptations, and is gone to prepare manſions for thee.

19. Thou who haſt ſeen Chriſt all, and thyſelf abſolutely nothing, who maketh Chriſt all thy life, and art dead to all righteouſneſs beſides; do Chriſt this one favour for all his love to thee, love all his poor ſaints, (the meaneſt, the weakeſt, notwithſtanding any difference in judgment); they are engraven on his heart, let them be ſo on thine. *Pray for the peace of Jeruſalem, they ſhall proſper that love thee.* Pſalm cxxii. 6.

F I N I S.